

2007 CDHS Needs Survey

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Q1: How many systems will be surveyed?

A1: At the time of this writing the EPA has identified 114 large and 99 medium systems to be surveyed by California Department of Health Services (CDHS) and a contractor, for a total of 213 systems.

Q2: What is a “large”, “medium”, and “small” system?

A2: A large system is one that serves a population of 100,001 or more. A medium system serves a population of 3,301 to 100,000. A small system serves up to 3,300 people.

Q3: How are the costs for security-related projects addressed in the Survey?

A3: The EPA has decided to accept security projects with survey-generated or other forms of documentation provided that the submissions are within a “reasonable range”.

Q4: Are costs associated with natural disasters to be addressed in the Survey?

A4: Needs directly associated with natural disasters will be allowed for the Assessment. After the data is collected the EPA will decide how to report these needs to Congress. Projects funded by FEMA may be excluded.

Q5: What size systems are to be surveyed by, or in a partnership with, the CDHS?

A5: EPA is assigning medium and large systems to the States. EPA will bypass State Governments in the survey of small systems and conduct those surveys directly.

Q6: Where are the systems located?

A6: At the time of this writing the specific location of each system has not been divulged by EPA. However, it is likely that most or all of the larger systems will be located near large metropolitan areas and the medium-sized systems will be located all over the State.

Q7: Who conducted the 2003 Needs Survey in California?

A7: It was carried out by the water systems in cooperation with California Department of Health Services staff.

Q8: Can some interviews be conducted by telephone where adequate information can be obtained?

A8: It is possible that some of the smaller systems' surveys can be conducted by phone, provided they have very little to report. For the purposes of estimating the workload it is recommended that bidders assume that every system in the Survey will need to be visited in person.

Q9: Does a bidder have to be a California-based company?

A9: No.

Q10: What specific information is being sought for the survey?

A10: Reference the Needs Survey Form Example available on the Needs Survey web page: http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ddwem/srf/Needs_survey/default.htm . This is from the previous Needs Survey and is a good example of the type of information that the EPA will require in the 2007 Survey. There will be some changes to how and what information will be reported in the 2007 Survey but the specifics on those changes are not available at the time of this writing.

Q11: Is the Survey based on violations by water systems?

A11: No. The list of systems selected for survey is based on a statistical analysis performed by EPA and does not include any violation data from specific systems.

PRE-BID CONFERENCE
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1: How does your schedule that you've laid out on page 2 of Exhibit B interface with the two budget years?

A1: The amount that CDHS spends on this project each fiscal year will come from that fiscal year's budget. Our fiscal year begins on July 1. This work will actually occur in three CDHS fiscal years.

Q2: Is each system survey something that can be accomplished on a single visit?

A2: A majority of the systems surveys should be completed with one visit, each. How much time required to visit a system will, in part, be determined by how skilled the contractor is in setting up the visits and interfacing with the staff at each system.

Q3: What about line-item transfers? Can transfers be between two different budgetary years or within the same year only? Using travel as an example, let's say we use more travel funds the first year than we use the second year. If we stay under the threshold of the line-item for travel, would we have to make an amendment to the budget? Can we shift funds from the second fiscal year to the first fiscal year?

A3: This is explained in detail in Paragraph 6 of Exhibit B. Cumulative line item shifts of up to \$25,000 or 10% of the annual agreement total may be made, whichever is greater, up to a cumulative annual maximum of \$50,000, provided the annual agreement total does not increase or decrease.

Q4: How similar was the previous survey to this survey?

A4: This survey is very similar to the previous Survey. The codes have been modified slightly, and some of the areas allowing for liberal needs/cost estimating have been eliminated.

Q5: Would the Access 2000 Database be made available to us for referral purposes?

A5: Yes.

Q6: Do you have to be an engineer to make site visitations?

A6: No.

Q7: Schedule on Appendix II is difficult to read. Do you have any other schedules in the timeline that are easier to read?

A7: That is a scan of a document we received from EPA. The program-specific schedule information can be found in Paragraph D. "Survey of Work", of Exhibit A, "Scope of Work".

Q8: On Exhibit A, P 3 of 6, Paragraph 4, line b(5); if modeling parameters cost data is not available, on how many systems will we have to resort to using modeling data?

A8: Modeling data shall be used whenever actual cost estimates are not available.

Q9: Who calculates what the assigned value is in relation to the MCL level?

A9: MCL levels are determined by EPA. There will be no extraneous statistical analysis of MCL trend data required of the person doing the Survey for a system.

Q10: Is the DVBE evaluation of bidders going to be done before the contract is awarded?

A10: A contract will not be awarded until all of the following steps are completed:

- 1. Bids are open**
- 2. A review of all bids is made and for the lowest responsive bidder(s)**
- 3. An examination of selected low bidder documents is completed to ensure they are a responsive bidder(s). Once it is determined that all requirements have been met, then a review of the DVBE documents is completed to ensure DVBE requirements have been met by one of the following methods.**
 - a. Actual participation (full 3% participation of a DVBE), or**
 - b. A combination of Good Faith Effort documentation and partial participation (anything less than 3% participation), or**
 - c. The completion of the Good Faith Effort documentation.**

Q11: Who provides the data that determines if a system is in violation of MCL levels?

A11: The system being surveyed is to provide that information.

Q12: Based on your experience, how many systems would require a return visit or have to follow up data sent?

A12: This would depend heavily on the skills of the person doing the survey. In the past, the requirement for a revisit of the information was often triggered by a system survey not meeting the needs of the EPA.

Q13: EPA would have a comment on every single one?

A13: In the last Needs Survey, EPA commented on almost all of the system surveys.

Q14: Referring to back-up data or costs, how much data do we have to use to substantiate additional cost?

A14: Typically, for each type of project there will be a key type of information. Examples of this would be capacity for a well, or length and height for a fence.

Q15: Are you expecting the contractor to provide cost estimates?

A15: Cost estimates will come from the water system and be included in the Survey by the contractor.

Q16: Is the contractor supposed to consider what the present population needs are or are we supposed to consider in our calculations what the future water population/needs would be? Who does that? How do you split the project up?

A16: The needs reflected in the Survey can only apply for the current population. The population data will be available to the winning bidder, and the systems will have such data. If a project has a portion of its costs for future population growth, that cost will have to be separated out from the valid Needs Survey costs.

Q17: Table of Contents Budget Detailed Worksheet 1C. Where is it?

A17: The Table of Contents is incorrect. Worksheet 1C is not part of this IFB.

Q18: Is there a process by which water suppliers have responsibility to provide information for the contractor to fill out the forms for the bids?

A18: There is no regulatory process to force the water systems to cooperate with the person carrying out the survey. However, with proper communication and help from DHS staff we have had great success in the previous Needs Survey.

Q19: Is the water supplier expected/required to review the data i.e. forms before submittal?

A19: The water system is not required to review the data. However, some water systems may want to be involved to the level that includes a review.

Q20: What does the code "PSW" mean?

A20: Purchased Surface Water

Q21: Suppose you get a master plan from the utilities. It sounds like the contractor will mate a master plan to the form. Is this correct?

A21: The contractor will find that a master plan will have much of the information needed to complete the Survey. A master plan will not normally be submitted in its raw form, however.

Q22: Could you describe the nature of the documents that you would require in .pdf format. Also, will they need to be "searchable"?

A22: Supporting documentation such as cost estimates would need to be in .pdf format. CDHS will not be accepting such information in hard copy format. The files will not need to be searchable.

Q23: On Exhibit A, p.5, you will approve the subcontractors. If we have business partners would the partner have to be pre-approved? Or if the partner is part of the team that is awarded the contract, are partners automatically approved?

A23: The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) reserves the right to review, approve, or disapprove subcontractors. CDHS may waive this right at its

own discretion. Subcontracts of \$5000 or more are subject to prior review and written approval of CDHS. CDHS may, at its discretion, may waive this right.